

Walking in Hungarian Footprints in East Africa –
An Editorial Preface

We were deeply moved at the Africa Research Centre of the University of Pécs when the Embassy of Hungary in Nairobi invited us to participate in the “Hungarian Memorials in East Africa” project. This created an opportunity for fruitful cooperation once again with colleagues participating in (and often leading) Hungarian academic and field research, education, and awareness-raising in connection with Africa. We are incredibly grateful to Ambassadors Zsolt Mészáros and Attila Koppány, as well as former Kenyan Ambassador László Máthé, who played a crucial role in launching the project.

This book is published as a special issue of the Hungarian Journal of African Studies. Though it is quite different in its size and appearance from our usual scientific papers, this is precisely what we had in mind. We intend this volume to be a light, lucid and scientifically-sound read. It serves as a detailed guide showcasing the routes or “footprints” that connect famous Hungarians in Africa with their accomplishments. We hope that this publication will encourage Hungarian tourists traveling in this region to visit these memorials. We would also like to invite tourists of other nationalities to explore these sites, which is why we have published this book in English as well.

As you read, you will see that many Hungarians left their mark in East Africa. The work they did expands on our universal understanding of Africa, and it is vital that we write about their accomplishments in Hungarian and other languages to share with the world. This undertaking means progress, an opportunity to move forward, and perhaps an inspiration for individuals and communities. Many Africans still remember these Hungarians and their legacies, and

they are certainly part of Hungarian cultural heritage and national pride. They are positive reference points for fostering a pragmatic foreign policy, and hopefully they can also help in developing and enriching bilateral Hungarian-African relations.

All this becomes even more meaningful and important considering that in April 2019 Hungary announced its "Africa Strategy" in conjunction with the "Southern Opening" policy. As devoted Africanists, we are always open to supporting Hungarian strategic policies. Nonetheless, our primary goal is to transfer knowledge to a wider audience, especially future generations. We developed this book with educational purposes in mind because we believe that these stories and biographies can engage young people at all levels of schooling. We also have a not-so-secret desire that many students will visit and explore East Africa.

In the first part of this special issue, Gábor Búr provides an historical overview of the Hungarians who visited East Africa in the 19th and 20th centuries. His article is followed by Gabriella Pusztai's writing on Hungarian doctors, and Attila T. Horváth's essay on Hungarian architects. Dániel Solymári's first article is about Hungarian missionaries. He summarises Hungarian development cooperation in the region from the decades following the First World War to recent projects in his second paper. The second major section of the book is a tourist guide written by Ildikó Szilasi.

At the very end of the special issue, we list notes and resources for our writings. These serve as great source materials for further in-depth research, or just for your reading enjoyment.

My fellow authors and I wish you an instructive and relaxing time with this book. We also encourage you to book one of our tour offers. Enjoy.

Dr. István Tarrósy
Editor of the special issue